

Available online at www.sciencedirect.com**ScienceDirect**

Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 117 (2014) 179 – 184

Procedia
Social and Behavioral Sciences

ICSPEK 2013

Urban Orienteering Competitions – a Unique Activity of Didactic Communication

Ioan Dorin Nan^{ab*}^a “Gheorghe Lazar” National College, Sibiu, 1-3, Gheorghe Lazar Street, Sibiu, 550165, Romania^b “Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu, Victoriei Boulevard, 550024, Romania

Abstract

The aim of our project was to deepen understanding of the legacy of our predecessors, which are to be found in the historical centre of Sibiu, to develop map reading skills using the techniques and rules of orienteering. Most students participated enthusiastically in the search for historical sights and found the activity extremely attractive. Moreover, both the preparation stage, when the students learnt all together or in groups how to use a map in order to locate the historical sights, and the follow-up stage, when they disseminated the results, contributed to developing team spirit and a sense of belonging. Communication among students and with the form teacher also improved and students discovered new interests and skills.

© 2013 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. Open access under [CC BY-NC-ND license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).
Selection and peer-review under responsibility of ICPEK 2013.

Key words: urban orienteering competition, didactic communication, high school students;

1. Introduction

We can talk about the optimizing of didactic communication when we overcome the blockages and barriers in communication, which are mostly caused by rigid and schematic activities, in which students do not feel involved, and which take place within the classroom and according to the school schedule. The didactic context should be organised in such a manner that students should be not only mere receivers, but also interlocutors who participate in a dialogue by asking questions or by giving creative solutions to situational problems that occur naturally or are created by the teacher. The context of optimizing didactic communication is provided by extracurricular activities, in particular by those taking place outside school.

* Corresponding author. Tel.: 0040-0745-691994; fax: +0-000-000-0000 .
E-mail address: dorinnan@yahoo.com

Our project focuses on the idea that “A different kind school”, based on extracurricular activities, provides opportunities for students to discover their own new skills and interests. Moreover, it makes students more responsible for their own activities, increases the level of independence in decision-making, reinforces the students’ positive features, and therefore optimizes didactic communication – as shown by Soos (1993, p. 8) in the chapter “Orienteering in the educational context”. An orienteering competition in the old centre of the city of Sibiu may be an activity that stimulates the students’ interest in finding out new information and may lead to the shaping of a more homogeneous group of students and better communication with their form teacher.

2. Material and methods

2.1. Target group

Students in the 11th grade G at the “Gheorghe Lazar” National College of Sibiu

2.2. Aim

To increase the students’ interest for subjects related to history, art and architecture, illustrated by the historical centre of Sibiu, by means of an urban orienteering competition.

2.3. Educational objectives

- To use the tourist map of the city of Sibiu
- To observe the rules of an orienteering competition
- To work with team members in order to discover cultural, scientific, administrative clues mentioned as checkpoints, marked on the map and on the competition sheets
- To communicate experience to classmates and the form teacher and to contribute to the analysis of the activities within the project

2.4. Date, duration and venue of the activity

Our project is part of the programme called “A Different Kind of School” and was implemented on the 6th of April, 2012. The preparation for the students’ participation in the orienteering competition was done in the classroom and it lasted for an hour. The duration of the trail was set to an hour and a half, whereas the dissemination of the results and experiences was supposed to last for another hour and a half, again in the classroom.

3. Description of the activities

3.1. The preparation of the competition

We applied the general rules for organizing accompanied orienteering contests as presented in the books “Performance orienteering” (Ticleanu, 1984), “Orienteering as a sport” (Soos, 1993) and “Orienteering - past, present and future” (Dezideriu, 1996).

We chose a tourist map of the historical centre of the city of Sibiu from a book entitled “Sibiu-Hermannstadt” (Hodis et al., 2000). We selected a series of important historical, cultural, architectural and administrative objectives described in “Sibiu - Ghid cultural-turistic” (Avram and Crişan, 1998). We drew up three maps for the competition, which each included seven objectives. Each location that was to be searched by students was

marked with a circled number on the map. We made multiple copies of the maps and each team was given a copy. In Table 1, we mentioned the historical monuments included in our competition and the clues to be identified by the students.

Table 1. The historical monuments included in the competition

Map code	Name, street and number	Clues to be identified
1	The Stairs Tower – The Defence Tower	Journeymen House 12 th -13 th centuries
9	House, Papiu Ilarian	Inscription on a board - Radu Stanca lived there
16	House - 19 th century, nr. 16, Nicolae Bălcescu street	Humanitas Bookshop on the ground floor
17	Huet Square - Evangelical Parish	The main representation of the coat of arms on the house facade
19	House, nr. 5, Nicolae Bălcescu	Lucian Bologa, Iacob Bologa and Timotei Popovici lived there
20	Franz Binder Museum (1826-1875). Small Square	Hermes house – headquarters of the Association of German Handicraftsmen
23	Hochmeister House, nr. 23, Tipografilor street	Petőfi Sandor lived there
24	Arts house - Small Square	Craft house and former market house of the butchers
25	Pharmacy Museum - Small Square	House and former pharmacy “The Black Bear’s” (1777-1779)
48	Historical monument – house Nr.16, Avram Iancu street	Christian Fridrich Hanemann (1755-1843) – founder of homeopathy
50	Roman-Catholic church of the Monastery “Saint Ursula” – Ursulinelor Church	One of the oldest houses in the city centre 14 th century, Böbel House
51	Roman-Catholic church of the Monastery „Saint Francisc”, Şelarilor Street	Dating since the 15 th century (1478)
53	History Museum – Altemberger House, nr.2, Mitropoliei street	Historical monument, 1716
54	Biserica Reformată, nr. 11, Mitropoliei street	House and former Town Hall
56	Caryatids House, nr. 13, Mitropoliei street	The year the church was built is marked as MDCCLXXXVI
60	ASTRA Library	Since the 18 th century
61	Neptune Public bath	How many caryatids are there?
65	Old people’s home, nr. 4, Azilului street	Entrance board: Andrei Şaguna, Timotei Cipariu, Gh. Bariţiu
82	Central post office, nr. 14, Mitropoliei street	Inauguration date: December, 11 th , 1904
P	Goldsmith Square	Since 1292
		A solar clock is marked in the upper part of the frontispiece
		Six houses declared and marked as historical monuments

We designed the competition sheets, mentioning the clues for each historical objective (numerical codes), leaving blanks to be filled in by the students to confirm identification of the various objectives. On the back of the sheet, for each historical objective, we added one or two questions concerning the item that had to be searched. For instance, we asked “Since when has it been used for the current purpose?” or “Who lived in this house?”. The answers could be found in various inscriptions on the building or on its frontispiece. Chart 1.a. presents the competition sheets and the items that had to be identified by the students, whereas Chart 1.b. shows the back of the sheet, with the blanks to be filled in with information about the objectives. Below we have provided the competition sheet for trail no. 1.

Chart 1.a. – competition sheet

Map code	25	65	53	82	60	19	23
Clues, historical and cultural objectives	What was its initial use and its name?	When did it start to have the same use it has at present?	What other use did it have and what was its other name?	What is there on the upper frontispiece?	What famous names are mentioned on the entrance	Who lived in this house?	Who lived in this house?
	What was the period when it was called that						

way?

board?

Chart 1.b. The back of the competition sheet for trail no. 1

Map code	25	65	53	82	60	19	23
Blank spaces to be filled in with clues about the objectives to be identified							

3.2. Preparation of students for the competition

The students were informed about the tourist map of the historical centre of the city and were taught to use the map by means of conventional signs, orientation in the field, etc. Then we informed them about the rules of a tourist orienteering competition: starting order, use of competition sheets, ranking according to the discovery of each checkpoint represented by a historical objective and timing. Further on, we organised the teams according to the students' preferences and we decided the starting order by drawing lots. There were ten two-member teams and one three-member team.

3.3. The orienteering competition

The teams left the starting point every three minutes. Each team was given a map and the competition sheets two minutes before leaving. The teams started out from the classroom and were supposed to return to the same classroom. This was quite handy, as our school is located in the old city centre. Every time a team arrived, we recorded the time and we marked the competition sheet.

3.4. The students' results

Four teams reached all the checkpoints, three teams reached only six, three teams reached five checkpoints, whereas one team reached four, and was not back on time either. The synoptic table of the competition reveals the results and the ranking of the teams (see Table 2).

Table 2. Results and ranking

Starting number	Initials of the team members	Trail	Departure time	Arrival time	Competition time (minutes)	Reached checkpoints	Ranking within the trail	General ranking
1.	N. L., S. A., L. I.	1	0.00	56.30	56.30	7	III 1	4
2.	R. D., P. M.	2	0.00	65.30	65.30	6	II 2	7
3.	D. A., P. A.	3	0.00	62.28	62.28	6	II 3	6

4.	B. A., C. R.	1	3.00	57.10	54.10	7	II 1	III
5.	C. S., H. S.	2	3.00	89.45	86.45	5	III 2	10
6.	P. Ș., C. A.	3	3.00	60.27	57.27	5	III 3	8
7.	G. D., I. B.,	1	6.00	68.48	62.48	5	4	9
8.	P. P., H. A.	2	6.00	110.10	-	4	-	-
9.	M. P., C. S.	3	6.00	51.50	45.50	7	I 3	II
10.	H. C., T. C.	1	9.00	52.10	43.10	7	I 1	I
11.	B. S., V. R.	2	9.00	55.14	46.14	6	I 2	5

4. Dissemination of activities

After each team had arrived, we checked their sheets and analysed their results in terms of discovery of historical objectives and provided information concerning the ones which had not been identified. By doing that, we tried to elicit the students' curiosity towards those objectives. When all the teams had returned, we talked about the experience they had had during this tourist orienteering competition, something that the students did for the first time. According to our students, the activity was original and appealing. At the end of the competition, the students expressed their joy and shared their feelings about what they had done, revealing the satisfaction they felt when identifying a clue or an inscription. They also confessed that, in the end, they realized the errors leading to their failure in finding certain clues. In order to find out the students' opinions about the activities in the programme called "A Different Kind of School", students were required to fill in a questionnaire. Question 10 was: "What activity did you enjoy most?". Ten students mentioned the competition in the city centre. One of the students even wrote: "I have learned new things about Sibiu."

5. Conclusions

- The general aim of the project has been fully achieved (see the last quote) - students have improved their knowledge about the history, art, architecture of the city. However, we also realised that we need to cooperate with teachers of other subjects in order to offer students a wider range of information.
- As shown in Table 2, most teams discovered all or all but one of the historical objectives proposed, which proves they could use a map, which was one the objectives of the project.
- All teams observed the rules of orienteering except for one, who failed to observe the time limit, which means that however the second objective was generally met.
- The team spirit, communication between the members of the same team as well as competitive spirit were developed.
- During the follow-up activity, presentation skills were developed and reflection on what happened was encouraged. This proved that multidisciplinary activities are appropriate to didactic communication.

- The positive feedback of most of the students on this form of didactic activity encouraged us to go on. We will certainly plan similar activities in the old centre of our city as well as in the Astra Museum in Dumbrava forest.
- We should pay more attention to extracurricular activities in and outside school due to their formative and educative value.

References

- Avram, Al. & Crişan, V. (1998). Sibiu-Ghid cultural-turistic, Bucureşti: Editura FF Press, 63, 72-84, 92-110
Dezideriu, H., (1996), Orientarea, trecut, prezent şi viitor, Sibiu, Editura Tipotrib
Hodis, N., Florea I. & Simond, I. (2000). Sibiu-Hermannstadt, Sibiu: Editura ETAPE, 21
Soos, Gh., (1993), Sportul orientării, Craiova, Editura Avrămească
Țicleanu, Gh., M., (1984), Orientarea de performanță, Bucureşti, Editura Sport-Turism